

247 Wanda Landowska

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III

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disques

FOR AUGUST 1932

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H. ROYER SMITH COMPANY, PUBLISHERS, PHILADELPHIA
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IT IS time that the long-playing process, already condemned so vigorously by correspondents of this magazine, be subjected to another examination. Now that the first excitement aroused by the novelty and supposed advantages of the new discs has worn off, as well as the profound disappointment that followed the first hearing of the records themselves, it is perhaps easier to judge them in a fair and impartial spirit, seeing their flaws and virtues alike without prejudice.

The new process has had a rather rocky road to travel, and its troubles — many and perplexing from the beginning — have not been viewed with much sympathy by the public. Launched last fall with a vast amount of enthusiasm, the geniality of the first welcome soon gave way to undisguised hostility, and not, it must be added in all fairness, without abundant reason. Unfortunately, the records fully deserved the harsh criticism they received. There was naturally a great deal of disappointment, and whether that disappointment was not altogether justified or whether it proceeded from excessive and impossible hopes and expectations is perhaps debatable, but in any case doesn't make much difference. It was plain and indisputable to all ears that the long-playing records, in their first stage, were not acceptable to collectors accustomed to the finest reproduction obtainable from the

best modern standard records.

Last winter, in the January issue of *Disques*, in response to a request made in the December editorial that subscribers state their reactions to the long-playing records, three pages of letters, all heartily damning the new discs, were printed.

In essence, all of the correspondence—both that which was printed and that which could not be published because of space exigencies—was depressingly the same. It was commonly agreed that the long-playing records had been issued prematurely, that they were not yet ready for commercial distribution, that they were by no means comparable with the standard records, that whatever advantages they possessed in increased playing time were far outweighed by the inferior reproduction. The trouble with the long-playing process, moreover, was twofold: neither records nor machines were satisfactory. Both badly needed improvements. No wonder collectors whose hopes had been sent soaring by a widespread advertising campaign were bitterly disappointed!

The records, as was mentioned above, were poorly recorded, taking us back to the hectic days of early electrical reproduction. And the machines did not reproduce them properly, principally because of the difficulty encountered in making a motor

revolve accurately at $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. This has been one of the most vexatious problems the engineers have had to struggle with, and it was only recently, indeed, that it was satisfactorily solved.

But over eight months have passed since the first long-playing records were issued. In the interval important changes have been made, and it is these changes that we propose to discuss here. They are significant enough to warrant thorough consideration by every collector, and especially by those who, discouraged and disgusted with the first long-playing records, reached the conclusion—as premature as the program transcriptions themselves—that no hope could be expected from that quarter. In the January editorial it was suggested that: “The important thing now is for the manufacturers to improve the program transcriptions . . . issue an attractive catalogue of new recordings . . . bring out a satisfactory and inexpensive two-speed motor for the owners of electrical machines not adapted for long-playing . . .”



That sounded like a pretty large order at the time, and perhaps like as sweet and hopeless a dream as Socialism. But that it was by no means more than lay within the manufacturers' power to achieve has been strikingly proved by the developments of the past couple of months. For is it generally realized that the suggestions listed above have now been admirably carried out? Is it generally realized that, in the past six months, the long-playing records have been greatly improved, so that they now offer much the same fine reproduction as that obtainable from the best standard records? Is it realized that, though the number of interesting long-playing discs is still limited—they can, in point of fact, be counted on the fingers of one hand,—nevertheless several important works have recently been issued on long-playing records? And, finally, is it generally known that a highly satisfactory and inexpensive device designed to convert a 78 r.p.m. motor into one capable of operating accurately at both the 78 and $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. speeds has at long last been issued?

Are these things generally known? Apparently not, judging from our correspondence. The majority of collectors seem to have decided that, since the first long-playing records were bad, subsequent issues would be equally unsatisfactory. As far as we can make out, at any rate, the long-playing process seems to be as much ignored today as it was three or four months ago. In this matter, regrettably enough, collectors have run true to form. Tolerance is one thing that is not very conspicuous among the rank and file of those who listen to music by means of the phonograph. This has its disadvantages. There are collectors who still firmly believe that good records are issued by only one company and therefore absolutely refuse to consider the products of any other manufacturer, just as there are people who are staunch Republicans or Democrats at any cost. There are collectors who primly lift their noses whenever the radio is mentioned, whose reaction to the word *radio* is similar to that of a bull to a piece of red flannel. Now the radio is an excellent and immensely useful device, and if American programs are largely unspeakable trash, that is not so much the radio's fault as it is that of those into whose incompetent and soiled hands it has fallen.

The machine, in theory, is admirable. That it can be made to serve a variety of useful purposes is demonstrated by the fine programs that are given in Europe, where talkative sales-managers have not yet assumed complete control of the broadcasting stations. There is no reason why, because a man is fond of the phonograph, he must therefore despise the radio. The two need not clash. There is, of course, far too much nonsense on the air—at least in America—for anyone to rely upon the radio for complete musical satisfaction, but there is also enough interesting matter to make a radio, if not absolutely necessary as yet, at least highly desirable in any home. Yet it is plain that today many collectors rant unjustly against the radio, not because the radio is a “soulless” machine, not because the American broadcasting companies are largely fourth-rate so far as the music they give is concerned, but because they are made uneasy by the competition the radio offers the phonograph. They are jealous of their records and machines and can’t stand anyone pointing out that now and then radio broadcasting at its best—for American radio broadcasting has been brought to an amazing degree of perfection—is as good as, and maybe even superior to, what their records give them. Record collectors would make a provocative field of study for Dr. Freud, who could have an enjoyable time determining why some people grow pale when any needle other than a fibre is used, why some still maintain that acoustic machines are the finest, why some *enjoy* changing records every three or four minutes, and why others, enchanted by the spectacle of a well known name on a record label, consider an old, raspy, acoustical record superior to a good modern recording of the same piece.

The same sort of thing has been noticeable in the public’s reaction to the long-playing records. Sorely disappointed by the failure of the first long-playing records, a large portion of it decided that the whole thing was a vast mistake and therefore not worth serious attention, just as some collectors, hearing an unsuccessful record of some manufacturer with whose products they are not familiar, condemn all the products of that manufacturer. They have entirely lost sight of the fact that the first electrical records were similarly unsatisfactory, that few inventions come into the world in perfect form.



This is a pity. The program transcriptions deserve a better fate. There is, of course, something to be said for tastes so lofty and impeccable that they cannot tolerate any compromise with perfection, or at least with what necessarily must pass for perfection in a highly imperfect world. But, as we have been trying to show, it is not solely impatience with imperfect things that has been responsible for the public’s ignoring of the long-playing records. It is narrow-mindedness, prejudice, unfavorable publicity, unnaturally thin pocketbooks, unreasonably high hopes gone sour—and, just as important, some bungling upon the part of the manufacturers; for it is true, in justice to the record-buying public, that opportunities to hear the long-playing records on an adequate machine have been rather rare. It will take some time, no doubt, but once the public hears these new records and realizes how simple it is now to play them, they will become immensely popular.

No one, we take it, needs to be told of the advantages offered by a good long-playing record. These advantages have already been sufficiently indicated in these pages and surely it doesn’t require an overly active imagination to perceive them.

It is pretty safe to say that any sensible person would infinitely prefer having a symphony on the two sides of one 12-inch record to having it on the eight sides of four 12-inch standard records,—always providing, of course, that the reproduction was equally good in both cases. Well, that is what we have today.

Just what has been done to improve the long-playing records we do not know. But one thing is obvious: the long-playing records that are being issued today do not play so long as the first examples did. In fact, the playing time is little over half as long as formerly. The grooves are therefore not so close together. Some of the first batch of program transcriptions played as long as sixteen or seventeen minutes. Those now being issued play about nine or ten minutes. No doubt that has something to do with the improved reproduction.

Take, for example, the recent recording of Carpenter's *Song of Faith*. The work was recorded last spring at Camden by the Chicago A Cappella Choir under the direction of Noble Cain, with an organ and the Victor Symphony Orchestra. It was recorded for both standard and long-playing records; in accordance with the new policy recently outlined by the RCA Victor Company, there was no dubbing, which we have been assured has been entirely discontinued. Play both types of records on an adequate machine, and you will, we feel certain, find no appreciable difference. In both the recording is equally fine, and in the long-playing version you have to change record sides only once, as against the three necessary for the standard.

A better example, of course, is the *Gurre-Lieder* recording. This work, as everybody now knows, was recorded by Victor at the public performances last spring. Both standard and long-playing records were taken of the performances. The advantages of the latter set are manifold. *Gurre-Lieder* is a long work, requiring twenty-seven 12-inch record surfaces. The long-playing requires only thirteen. You have then only half as many breaks in the long-playing version, and this is doubly desirable, since the breaks in the standard set are pretty bad. Recording the work at the actual performances, the engineers were compelled to break* the records not when they wanted to but when they had to, sometimes in the middle of a note, so that frequently the music at the beginning and ending of the records is entirely spoiled. This fault is not present in the long-playing version. Here the breaks, while not altogether felicitous (what breaks, save those at the conclusion of a movement, are?), are surely not objectionable and occur at more or less logical places. Moreover, they occur only about every nine or ten minutes, giving the listener ample opportunity to settle back comfortably in his chair and even get through a cigarette before it is necessary again to leap up and change records. In addition to this, the recording in the long-playing set is magnificent and equals that in the standard. Finally, the long-playing set is \$7 cheaper than the standard. That ought to be enough to make it worth anyone's while at least to consider the long-players. An object of derision only a few months ago, they now merit as much attention as the standard records, and by this time next year will probably be taken just as seriously.

* See Mr. O'Connell's letter published in the Correspondence Column this month.

Perhaps, in the above attempt to discover some plausible reasons for the relative obscurity of the long-playing records, too much blame has been cast upon the always suffering record collector. If the long-playing process is still appreciated by only a few collectors, then that is as much the manufacturers' fault as anyone's. To begin with, the long-playing records were advertised long before they were available, and when they at last did appear they were pretty bad. Disappointment is always a rather difficult dose to swallow, but it is doubly so when it follows a period of impatience. In such a situation one may be forgiven for losing the temper.

Moreover, after the records themselves were available, it was several weeks before the machines to play them on were issued. One could gaze upon the new records, handle them, inspect the fine grooves, speculate on what they contained—but one could not play them. At first tantalizing, this soon grew irritating even to the most patient. And then when the machines did finally appear, they were not exactly masterpieces. The reproduction obtained from them—even when standard records were played—was only fair and by no means equal to that obtained from previous models. And to make matters worse, the motors gave considerable trouble, refusing to revolve accurately at $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m.

The recent long-playing machines, like the recent long-playing records, are somewhat better. They leave much to be desired, of course, but they will play the long-playing records fairly satisfactorily,—well enough, at any rate, to show that they stand comparison with the best standard discs. No doubt the new models to be issued in the fall will be much better. It is surely time that a good commercial machine be brought out at a reasonable price. In the past three years few if any major improvements have been made, so that there hasn't been much of an inducement for the owner of a good electrical machine to exchange his instrument for a newer model.

This owner of a good electrical machine can now, for a small sum, adapt his instrument for long-playing very readily. The inexpensive device designed to convert a 78 r.p.m. motor into one that will play at both the standard and long-playing speeds has at last been issued. Its mechanism was described on page 166 of the June, 1932, issue of *Disques*, so that there is no need to repeat that information here. Suffice it to say that the RCA Victor Dual-Speed Turntable, the name of the device, is far and away the most efficient method of obtaining the two speeds on one motor we have yet seen, and in fact it is superior to the two-speed motors. It consists of a new turntable which, when installed in place of the old one, will operate accurately at either speed, according to the position of the switch. This equipment, which includes the highly important tone-arm counterbalancing weight, can be used on all electric phonographs save those early models which employed the goose-neck type pick-up. It is extremely important, however, that the motor on which the new turntable is to be placed revolve absolutely evenly at 78 r.p.m. Slight variations in speed are not so noticeable at the 78 speed, but at $33\frac{1}{3}$ they will become acutely unpleasant. In other words, if your motor revolves unevenly at 78 r.p.m., it will also revolve unevenly at $33\frac{1}{3}$, and the defect, not always noticeable at the former speed, will cause very poor reproduction at the slow speed. But if your motor revolves correctly at 78 r.p.m., it will also revolve correctly at $33\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. Therefore, if the device does not operate satisfactorily, the trouble

can be blamed on the motor, not on the new turntable.

Thus, in less than a year after their first appearance and after a rather lame start, the long-playing records seem destined soon to enjoy the popularity they deserve. The two really serious objections to them—*i.e.*, the inferior recording and the difficulty of finding suitable equipment on which to play them—have been competently disposed of by the manufacturers. As yet, there are not many good long-playing records, but next season the present small catalogue should be considerably expanded, and in the meantime there are several releases that warrant attention.

It is to be hoped that the public, realizing the vast possibilities in the new process, will reveal sufficient interest to encourage the manufacturers to continue the good work so admirably begun this past spring. Now that it has been shown that actual performances can be satisfactorily recorded and that long-playing records can be made to give eminently satisfying results, next season should (the word is used advisedly) be an excellent one in the phonograph industry, profitable to manufacturer, dealer and collector alike.



American subscriptions to the Haydn Quartet Society, recently formed in England under the auspices of the Gramophone Company, Ltd., will be handled in the same manner as subscriptions to the Beethoven Sonata Society—that is, through RCA Victor dealers. The first album will consist of seven 12-inch discs containing the Quartet in C, Op. 20, No. 2; Quartet in C, Op. 33, No. 3; Quartet in G, Op. 77, No. 1; the artists are the Pro-Arte Quartet. Compton Mackenzie, who has heard proofs of the records, speaks highly of them in this month's *Gramophone*. "The performers are the Pro-Arte String Quartet," he says, "and both from the point of view of playing and of recording I think we shall be able to call these the most beautiful examples of chamber music hitherto produced for the gramophone up to date." The records will be issued in England in August, and should be available over here shortly afterwards. Like the first Beethoven Society album, the price of the set will be \$14. All subscriptions must be in by August 15.



With an audience of several thousand present, the RCA Victor Company gave a concert on the evening of June 25 at Robin Hood Dell, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. The records of Schönberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, recorded last spring at the public performances of the Philadelphia Orchestra, were played on special equipment, and Leopold Stokowski was on hand to explain the story and music of the work. The reproduction was extraordinarily fine, and though *Gurre-Lieder* is rather long, the large audience gave proof of its interest by remaining to the end. It was announced that similar performances would be given in the future.



The *Music Lovers' Guide* is to be the name of a new magazine dealing with phonograph records, the first issue of which is announced for September. The

Music Lovers' Guide will be published by the New York Band Instrument Company, and it will be edited by Axel Johnson, assisted by R. D. Darrell. It will contain three departments at first: Recorded Music, Radio, and Music in General. A radio editor is yet to be selected. The new magazine is extremely fortunate in having at its head Messrs. Johnson and Darrell, who have done so much for the phonograph industry through the *Phonograph Monthly Review*. Both have withdrawn active interest in the latter magazine, which has suspended publication during the summer months but will, according to report, resume publication in September, under the direction of Adolph A. Biewend. In the fall, then, it looks as if there will be three magazines devoted to records in this country, a condition as gratifying as it is extraordinary.



The Brunswick August releases were delayed in reaching us, and so the reviews will have to be postponed to the next issue. The records consist of five more Strauss waltzes in an album—the second series of this kind that Brunswick has issued—and included in the collection are: *Wine, Women and Song*, *Morning Papers*, *Artist's Life*, *Songs of Love* and *Viennese Bonbons*. Three orchestras and conductors are used: the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Robert Heger, the Berlin Philharmonic under Julius Prüwer, and a symphony orchestra under Alois Melichar.



Among the articles scheduled for early publication in *Disques* are:

“Charles E. Ives,” by Henry Cowell.

“Music in Mental Hospitals,” by Martha A. Kalms.

“The World of the Phonograph,” by Paul Rosenfeld.

“All Quiet on the Western Jazz Front,” by R. D. Darrell.

“Brahm's First Sextet,” by Daniel Gregory Mason.

“Aaron Copland,” by Isaac Goldberg.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotopia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

Music in a Summer Garden

By R. D. DARRELL

Mozart liked his Milan apartment where violinists practised above and below him, a singing master on one side, an oboist on the other . . . "It gives one new ideas." But today's cliff dwellers seem to get as little mental stimulation as fresh air when summer opens the windows on apartment courts and lets in tonal chaos. The new Babel: a score of radios, a score of stations; entertainment out of Syracuse, Montreal, and Davenport, Iowa. There may be a certain rugged fascination about such super-Schönbergian medleys, but who (outside a few million Americans who can't be wrong) can stomach the harmonious unison when the pack of loud speakers converges wolfishly on a common objective—the candied strains of the *Perfect Song*? It is the curfew, and the ploughman homeward plods his weary way, leaving the world to the burnt cork darkness of A. & A.

Yet flee the city and up some placid stream come the canoeists and their portables bringing the tradition of the homeland and a fainter but unmistakable echo of plugged tunes and the unescapable rasp and grunt of the national comic heroes.

The critics, given too many concerts and too much paper to cover, have fostered the tradition of a summer moratorium on music. But the public, unconverted, flocks imperturbably to Stadium, Bowl, Pops, and Chautauqua; turns up its radio to cope with its neighbors; screws extra loud needles in its portable. It is the open season on music. The bars are down. There are no further pretensions of "appreciation" and self-education. The public unloosens its belt and gourmandizes.

I search for light for that portion of the public dear to us all, the plain man. Perhaps not so plain as most, but if not the man in the street still less an educator, propagandist, or critic. Yourself, or myself, who hears a goodly bit of music during the winter, does not travel (at least this year) to European festivals, takes in an occasional summer concert, gingerly essays the radio, and falls back on the selective, personalized medium of the phonograph—craving music, but for once not altogether sure of what to play.

Having no preconceived theory into which to fit satisfactory facts, discarding those more awkwardly shaped, I can write only from direct observation of the summer repertoires and experiences of my friends and myself.

I start conservatively by admitting, even stressing, that the vernal equinox, like prayer, changes things. Perhaps a temperature of ninety promotes the growth of aural wax. Perhaps one's mind as well as one's epidermis becomes suntanned. There are undoubtedly hardy fanatics who flagellate themselves in summer with winter scourges, Brucknerites and Wagnerites whose stamina is unweakened by torrid temperatures, but my Everyman is of a softer breed. And for him there are music and musical experiences assimilable in December but gagged at in August.

One of my diagnoses is that the warmer the weather, the less tolerant, less experimentative, more intensely prejudiced Everyman becomes. Instead of adapting himself to the demands of music, especially unfamiliar music, he insists on its adapting itself to his momentary mood and setting. He is more highly sensitized; uncongenial music antagonizes more fiercely, congenial music exerts a more moving

force than at any other time. Hearing becomes less patient, more easily fatigued, yet also more personal and impressible. Only the negative consideration seems to play any part in the choice of summer concert programs. The most familiar, being supposedly the least objectionable, is the safe and usually the only desideratum. It is in the implications of the positive consideration that the clue to true summer music lies, and some if not many individuals have learned to take advantage of it, tapping the reservoir of mysterious evocative power hidden in the depths of certain works and available fully only when the mood of the hearer is prepared and sensitized by the incalculable influences of scent and scene.

II

The prescription of music, always difficult, is simplified in winter by the practicability of naming safely if none too imaginatively such works as are accepted by common consent as "masterpieces." Summer music, for more ephemeral moods and intensified personalities, is too specialized and subtle for any general musical practitioner to prescribe. Everyman, given some clues, must search it out for himself by making his own tonal metabolism tests.

Often one discovers it by accident or circumstance. It was by pure chance that I happened to be reading

The windows glitter on the distant hill;
Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold
Stumble on sudden music and are still . . .

when the disc of the first movement of the Franck violin sonata was spinning on my phonograph, and I learned the inexplicable kinship of the Englishman's pastorale with the Belgian's. Or such relationships may be more obvious: one recognizes a bond on first acquaintance with W. H. Hudson's *Purple Land* and Fabini's *Campo*; Delius and Wordsworth are unmistakably akin.

Again some of the most illuminating and inseparable associations are fused from a sudden inspiration. As we sat on a roof one Fourth of July, watching the fiery parabolas of distant rockets and roman candles, the records of *Petrouchka* were put on a portable. Music and incandescent hour became one. The ballet in concert is a poor substitute after the perfect moment when the pirouetting Ballerina, the ferociously twitching Moor, the whole kaleidoscopic fair came matchlessly to life among that glittering meteoric shower across the black backdrop of July sky.

The natural taste of children, unspoiled by piano lessons and innocent of Guy Lombardo and Dr. Damrosch alike, often provides an unerring tonal index of a scene. My wife sits sketching a group of very young children blowing soap bubbles in the sun, and I placidly grind a portable, playing only what the children demand. Blissfully ignorant of what is popular and exhibiting instinctive likes and dislikes, they have me repeat again and again two pieces: the chorale prelude *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring* and *Brigg Fair*. (The opalescent spheres swell tenuously and lazily lift loose. I have mind only for the dark spectacled paralytic wheeled into the sunlit garden in Grez-sur-Loing . . .

All are my blooms; and all sweet blooms of love . . .)

Or for ruder, lustier moments, when the slanting light cuts across the sward

and dancing on the green is no anachronism: a little string band breaks into *Roman Soldiers* and

Madame will you talk?
Madame will you walk?
Madame will you marry me?

Then is the time for the more earthy of the Polish Israfel's mazurkas, the sturdily swinging German and contra dances of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven—honest *dorfmusik*. Even our own day has not entirely forgotten the singing of summer blood and stamping of untutored feet. Bartók, Strawinski, Holst, even Grainger also believe only in a god who knows how to dance, and if the Jig and Dargason of the *St. Paul's* Suite fail to move your arms and legs, then the rumble seat and the village movie are the only places for you.

Even the more fashionable pavilion cannot be wholly modernized by flask toters as long as there is a band that knows the insidious ways of a Strauss or Waldteufel waltz. Pilsner has given place to home brew, but while the dresses have lost their backs the girls have not, and blood has yet to run so thin that it does not stir to the intoxicating urge of a summer evening in *drei-viertel Takt*.

And as one who has nourished some faith in a native music I delight in chronicling one of my most precious musical experiences as taking place in a dirty narrow gauge railway train, lit by flaring oil lamps, when among the crowd returning from a beach resort an ancient fiddle and mouth harp bravely struck up *Turkey in the Straw* and the *Arkansaw Traveler*.

Only the theatrical, the pretentious, the sensational, the smell of the student's lamp are ruled out. The likes of the *Boléro* are not for our summer garden. But in it the Flemish and British madrigalists, Palestrina, Corelli, Vivaldi, dear old Gottlieb Muffet live again, as they never can live in the high pressure atmosphere of the concert hall. Chamber music comes back into its own, and the serenades of Mozart. The acrid pungence of oboes and bassoons was never meant for indoors; brass instruments lose something of their plangency, take on richness and warmth in the open air. The over-lush orchestra of the nineteenth century, with its emphasis on the silkier qualities of massed strings, finds itself out of place, unbalanced here, and we return to the more piquant and more crisply individualized colors of the older (and also newer) chamber orchestras.

Water as well as distance lends enchantment, and works tonal miracles. Lucky the man who can conceal a powerful electrical phonograph well out in his field or across his small pond, and hear the human voice, free from the stifling cloak of even the most cunning acoustic designs, expand and soar in untrammelled purity. Such joys are double expensive, for having once heard Hedwig von Debicka's Gluck, Elisabeth Schumann's Mozart, Madeleine Grey's Auvergne bourrées, and the Solesmes monks' plainchants in such a setting, one will return unhappily to the prison cells of music, the stage struck mob tension of even the finest formal concerts.*

*I frankly shirk the whole question of specifically programmatic nature music, for programs and program music are all things to all men. It does not occur to me to play pieces of MacDowell at sunset or by the sea merely because they are appropriately labelled by the composer. I attempt a synchronization and reinforcement of the pure feeling—unalloyed by literary associations—of mood and music. I might play a Mozart or Beethoven

III

I have long held that there are two ideal ways to hear music. Both are difficult. One is the way of the mystic or youth, concerned only—but wholly—with sensory perceptions, Dr. Dyson's "passive immersion of the soul in the profound depths of intuitive experience." The other is the way of the critic or advanced student, thoroughly active participation in music making, with the intellect as well as the senses at full stretch. One able to play but badly oneself pursues it at rehearsals or alone with a phonograph, sweating over a score. Players and hearer alike are free from the tension of an audience, they are intent solely on tonal webs, examining, analyzing, experiencing to the fullest possible degree. There may be some who can continue to do that through the summer, but I cannot, and I know of few who can. It calls for too much energy; its pure studiosness becomes more than a little artificial out of doors; one is distracted by the sounds and scents of the air. On the other hand, a purely intuitive experience is possible in winter only to the thoroughbred mystic and those who are making their first acquaintance with music. All of us have listened like that at one time, carried away, ecstatically intoxicated by sound unqualified by intellectual considerations. But there is a great deal of truth in the old saw that the more one knows about music the less one enjoys it. Knowledge of tonal good and evil blights the age of innocence; one attains discrimination, but the old rapture is irrevocably lost.

But another intoxication is still within reach,—this music in a summer garden when one forgets all that one knows, drinks in perhaps not so much music as the midsummer itself. And at the rare moments when tones are perfectly attuned to the mood, to the very wind and surface of the water, the hulking hills, the multitudinous whisper of the pines, there are profound depths for the soul to sound, depths too great for even the weightiest plummets of our intellects. The moment and the sounding are dangerous, illusive if not delusive. The rapturous drunken pleasure, the frightening stumble in the steady heart beat, the atavistic crawling of hairs along the spine are all extra-musical, an unveiling of the memory, a sorcery of the spirit.

Yet for this there are few of us who—caught in the grip of midsummer madness—will not unreservedly give up what is perhaps the greater illusion of intellectuality. The spell stems from instincts more ancient than the exercise of conscious intelligence. It is rooted in our roots, the poignance of dream life, "old, unhappy, far-off," echoes which have never ceased but which are too subtle, too fragmentary to be heard above the coarse buzzing of our waking minds, echoes "like those convent bells which are so effectively drowned out during the day by the noises of the streets that one would suppose them to have been stopped forever, until they sound out again through the silent evening air."

quartet at sundown, pit a Sibelius symphony against the surf, because such music for such moments is richly satisfying to me, just as a striding Handel concerto grosso is truer mountain music than a dozen *Alpensymphonies*. But I see no point in a contrarily minded avoidance of program music because of its title. If the second movement of Sibelius' Third is river music for me, so are the *Moldau* and *Summer Night on the River*, and while I seldom yearn for Mendelssohn or Debussy of a summer, *Fingal's Cave* blends capitably with salty savoured air, and *The Sea* gives me an all too real attack of *mal de mer*.

I hold that it is possible to study the works of the giants of music, examining and assimilating with our full perceptive and digestive powers, until even we Lilliputians can measure and comprehend the stature of greatness. There is no labor in life more richly rewarding. But to stop there is to remain within the limits of the mind, vast as Einstein's universe, but equally finite and circumscribed. Beyond lies the outer space of the dream world of the soul, traversed by genius, never by human talent. The adventurer in those regions finds his kingdom only as we are told we can enter that of heaven.

In our summer garden we forget the truth as well as the nonsense we have talked about purity in art. Intelligence is exchanged for intuition and instinct, a ponderous score for the crumpled bay leaf. The inviolate Muse is ravished unprotestingly by odors, the summer sky, the spaciousness of mountain night. Musical genius goes beyond tone and its weaving as surely as beyond its time, and to follow it even in illusion is an experience rarer, more to be cherished, than music alone can ever provide.



Wanda Landowska

By NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

Her fingers on the cembalo
Type out the polyphonic lore
Of Bach's Inventions,—and restore
The true original edition
Unobfuscated by tradition.

Her expert fingers on the cembalo
Upturn embellishments and trills,
Revive bicentenary thrills,
Hereto tabooed by orthodoxy
Whose Bach is only Bach by proxy.

Her dextrous fingers on the cembalo
Elaborate the double counterpoint
Where *Dux* and *Comes*, point counter point,
At measured intervals, in faithful imitation
Parade to finish in cadential exaltation.

N. S.

St.-Leu-La-Forêt—Boston. 1932.

St.-Leu-La-Forêt is a pastoral retreat some twenty kilometers out of Paris; the forest implied in the name is still there, but the village is making relentless inroads into it. Simple folk inhabit the district; close neighborhood of Paris hardly influences the leisurely pace of their lives, and the setting of the sun is still the signal for a general curfew. It is the eighteenth century preserved intact; and it is altogether fitting that the greatest protagonist living of the eighteenth century music should make her home at St.-Leu-La-Forêt. In Wanda Landowska's home the eighteenth century is preserved artistically; the ancient art is here made object of intimate and sympathetic study; the house, Number 88 on Rue Pontoise, which is Landowska's property and home, is the gathering center of many lovers of the music of the past. Aspirants and professional musicians from Berlin and Rome, London and Lisbon, Boston and San Francisco, come here as students to learn the art of playing on a wholly obsolete instrument, the harpsichord (=cembalo, =clavecin), under the guidance of the greatest player on this instrument who is also the greatest champion for its revival. So powerful is Wanda Landowska's conviction of the harpsichord's usefulness in modern times that she induced and inspired Falla to write his now celebrated Harpsichord Concerto, and Francis Poulenc the *Concert Champêtre* which also makes use of the clavecin (I use the terms *clavecin*, *cembalo* and *harpsichord* interchangeably as a reminder that all these names designate the identical instrument where the strings are plucked, as distinct from the clavichord where strings are struck).

Wanda Landowska teaches peripatetically—in the music room, in the concert auditorium, in the garden. In the music room the student learns the art at the keyboard, in the auditorium he presents a ready program to fellow-students, and in the garden he exchanges views on pertinent subjects. Then there is a library which includes quaint editions of obscure works, monumental editions of Bach's Gesellschaft, books in all European languages, and pictures of the multitudinous Wanda on the walls,—sketches made by famous artists, silhouettes, cartoons. A

series of photographs of Leo Tolstoï with inscriptions in Russian and French adorns her private study on the second floor of the spacious mansion.

The concert auditorium is built on simple lines—no architectural embellishments or trills—in the garden. Landowska's summer festivals of ancient music take place there on consecutive Sundays. Before a very distinguished assembly from Paris she plays informally. Often, before starting on a fugue, she would address—in Polish—her faithful majordomo, Kasimir—or, diminutively, Kazia,—suggesting that a window should be opened; or between two inventions she would ask—in German—her inseparable secretary Elsa about somebody in the audience who was not comfortably seated. Then—in French—she would say a few words about this or that piece on the program for the benefit of her friends, the audience. Her program notes, imaginatively written in the exquisite style, give an added incentive to enlightened enjoyment. Then, Wanda Landowska plays, changing from one instrument to another, and, when Chopin is in order, abandoning the cembalo for the modern pianoforte. Under her fingers, all these niceties of notation, slurs and staccatos, are animated and given form. Some new phonograph records of Wanda Landowska have appeared on the European market; the recording of the C Minor Fantasy of Bach is as near the original as could be wished; it seems we can hear the impact of the plucked strings.

II

The playing of Wanda Landowska bears the intuitive quality of true interpretation. It is so consistent with itself, every particular is thought out with such minute care that the whole acquires the faculty of immediate conviction. Wanda Landowska is least of all a pedantic interpreter; she is not intent on faithful reproduction of notated sounds, but rather on the restoration of the whole. In the vexed question of "small notes", suspensions, trills and other signs employed in the eighteenth century musical stenography, she follows the laws of musical consistency. The classics were much more liberal than the moderns. Much was left to a discreet interpreter in the music of even such a "mathematical" composer as Bach and no one could more justly set the boundaries of the permissible than Wanda Landowska herself in her fiery essay on ancient music*: "The ancient *ad libitum* was equivalent to our 'please, feel at home,' addressed to a gentleman with the assurance he will not presume upon it and turn the house upside down, throwing out of the window the things which are not to his taste, or introducing others which will not be to ours."

The book quoted and the numerous articles written by Wanda Landowska for European magazines reveal her as a writer of astounding resourcefulness and literary talent. Brilliant sallies of humor, historic anecdotage, easy and pertinent quotations from every conceivable author in every conceivable language make her writing something entirely different from a pedantic research-work compilation. And most certainly she is unique among professional virtuosos in her command of logical sequence and style. How many musician-interpreters can express their ideas, when and if they have any, in clear writing? How many among them would think of going through libraries in search of enlightening material? Wanda Landowska

* MUSIC OF THE PAST. By Wanda Landowska. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

has made herself a scholar free of pedantry and an artist free of ignorance. It is a happy and rare combination of qualities.

WANDA LANDOWSKA RECORDINGS

SONATA No. 9: *Pastorale*. (Scarlatti) One side and LE ROSSIGNOL EN AMOUR. (François Couperin le Grand) One side. One 10-inch disc (V-DA1130). \$1.50.

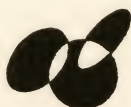
BOURRÉE D'Auvergne. (Transcribed by Wanda Landowska) One side and LE COUCOU. (Daquin) One side. One 10-inch disc (V-DA964). \$1.50.

GAVOTTE IN G MINOR. (Bach) One side and WOLSEYS WILDE. (Byrd) One side. One 10-inch disc (V-1424). \$1.50.

HARMONIOUS BLACKSMITH. (Handel) One side and TURKISH MARCH. (Mozart) One side. One 10-inch disc (V-1193). \$1.50.

DON JUAN: *Minuet*. (Mozart) One side and (a) LE TAMBOURIN. (Rameau) (b) LE COUCOU. (Daquin) One side. One 10-inch disc (V-1199). \$1.50.

ENGLISH SUITE IN E MINOR: *Passepied*. (Bach) One side and FANTASIA IN C MINOR. (Bach) One side. One 10-inch disc (V-DA1129). \$1.50.



The Columbia History of Music: Vol. III*

From Bach's Sons to Beethoven

The *Columbia History of Music By Ear and Eye*, begun a little over two years ago, has now reached the third volume, so that half of the six volumes planned to comprise the complete work are now available. Glancing over the first three volumes, neatly enclosed in compact black albums with attractively printed booklets, one is able to perceive the scope and value of the work more clearly than two years ago, when the set was first announced. If it seemed like a splendid undertaking then, deserving of the utmost praise and encouragement, it seems doubly so today now that half of the series is completed. When, some three years from now, the complete set of six volumes is finished, teachers, students and, above all, the ordinary music lover (for whom the work should be a godsend) will have an incomparable history of music to study and enjoy, one that will have sizeable advantages over any that have hitherto been published. For this unique history enables the student who cannot play not only to read about the music but also actually to hear it, and as frequently as he wishes to. And the importance of listening to music, with the further advantage of unlimited repetition, surely need not be pointed out here.

Though it is obvious that tremendous educational possibilities are latent in the phonograph, very little attempt has been made to utilize in a systematic way the vast amount of material available. Indeed, the Columbia history represents not only the most ambitious attempt to accomplish this, but with the exception of the Parlophone *Two Thousand Years of Music*—an admirable work, but one more restricted in scope than the Columbia history,—it is practically the only one of any consequence. Plenty of records containing music of nearly all important periods are available, but until the Columbia history was announced no one had attempted to arrange a workable and intelligent guide, so that the music lover could obtain a clear idea of the various steps by which music has evolved through the ages. That there is plenty of room for a history of music arranged in convenient, attractive and readily accessible form, with musical examples which one cannot only read about but also hear, goes without saying. The history, it is scarcely necessary to point out, should properly be used in conjunction with other records. Studying Mr. Scholes' booklet and listening to his records, the student should not stop there; he should in addition investigate the various catalogues and obtain further discs relating to the periods covered by the history.

Before considering Vol. III which has just been issued, it would be well to review briefly the contents of the first two volumes. Vol. I (reviewed on page 209 of the August, 1930, issue of *Disques*) consists of an album of eight 10-inch phonograph records and an illustrated booklet of some forty-eight pages written by Percy A. Scholes. It covers the outstanding musical developments up to the begin-

* THE COLUMBIA HISTORY OF MUSIC BY EAR AND EYE: Vol. III—*From Bach's Sons to Beethoven*. By Percy A. Scholes, with the collaboration of Harold Samuel, the Léner String Quartet, Haydn Draper, Isobel Baillie, Dorothy Stanton, Harold Williams, and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Clarence Raybould. Eight 10-inch discs (C-DB830 to C-DB837) in album with booklet. London: Oxford University Press and Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd. \$9.

ning of the seventeenth century, with special emphasis laid upon church choral music, instrumental music, solo song and secular choral music such as the madrigal in its various forms. The records consist of musical examples from significant English, Flemish and Italian composers of the period, recorded under the direction of Sir Richard Terry, Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch and Dr. E. H. Fellowes. Palestrina, Byrd, Bull, Farnaby, Norcome, Weekles, Dowland, Pilkington, Morley, Gibbons and Farmer are the composers dealt with in Vol. I. Mr. Scholes' booklet describes, comments upon and provides the proper historical background to each of the records, and in a manner notable for its clarity, charm and conciseness. The whole thing is carried out superlatively well. A vast amount of relevant information, not easy to obtain elsewhere, is miraculously compressed into astonishingly small space, and for once the early music is made clear and plausible to the uninitiated. For this reason Vol. I is perhaps the most valuable—if not the most interesting to the average music lover—of the whole set, since the music it deals with is often rather difficult to hear elsewhere. The records themselves are admirably chosen and produced, and quite apart from their place in the history they would arouse a great deal of interest if they were released separately on the various monthly lists.

II

Vol. II (reviewed on page 296 of the September, 1931, issue of *Disques*) considers the period from the beginning of opera and oratorio (1600), where Vol. I stopped, to the death of Bach and Handel. It was issued about a year ago and follows the same general plan of Vol. I. Like the first volume, too, it consists of eight 10-inch records and an illustrated booklet by Mr. Scholes. Monteverdi, Purcell, Corelli, Handel and Bach are the composers whose works are considered representative of the period and hence are dealt with in the booklet and on the records. The artists responsible for the records are the Bach Cantata Club under the direction of Kennedy Scott, Doris Owens (contralto), Frederic Jackson (harpsichord), Bratza (violin), Rudolph Dolmetsch (harpsichord), Arnold Dolmetsch (clavichord), Leon Goossens (oboe) and Robert Murchie (flute).

The third volume will probably be the most interesting of all to the majority of music lovers, though it is surely no more valuable than its predecessors. Bringing the student to familiar territory, it deals with music that is recognizable, that is more closely related to that which we are accustomed to hearing in our modern concert halls, and it is a well known fact that music lovers often like most that with which they are most familiar. The majority of music lovers can listen placidly enough, and often even with a great deal of enthusiasm, to music by Mozart, Haydn or Beethoven. But they cannot be made to accept Byrd, Bull or Farnaby as easily and without considerable preparation. Mr. Scholes, at the beginning of his booklet, states this trouble felicitously. "The period into which with this Album we enter," he says, "is, to the ordinary listener of today, the most important of all, for it is that in which there came into being the sort of music that to him sounds normal. . . . The music of the period preceding this (that of our Second Album) he is likely, at a first or second hearing, to look on as a little archaic; the music of the earlier periods (that of our First Album) as very much

so. . . . The 'ordinary listener', with the discs of our First Album on his gramophone, is as the 'ordinary reader' faced with the English of Chaucer: a good deal of the meaning is accessible, but some is lost, and there is a sense of considerable unfamiliarity. . . . The same listener, hearing the discs of our Second Album, is as the same reader with the English of Shakespeare before him: he can grasp the meaning pretty well now, but his access to it is still sometimes impeded. . . . But the music of Bach's sons and of Haydn and Mozart has a more familiar ring. Hearing it is like reading a novel of Sterne or Fielding or Richardson, or Boswell's Johnson, or Johnson's friend Burney's History of Music: the flavor is that of the eighteenth century, but the language is so much that of our own day that we can stride forward through the pages, meeting no retaining obstacle."

Vol. III is divided into four sections: the development of the piano sonata; the string quartet; the symphony, concerto and overture; and the German *lied*.

III

As for the records, it will suffice here to list them, with a few brief comments on the recording and interpretation; the music itself is admirably discussed by Mr. Scholes in his booklet, which is written and illustrated in a manner abundantly calculated to interest the music lover. The first two records, designed to exhibit the development of the piano sonata, are played by Harold Samuel and contain the first movement from C. P. Emanuel Bach's Pianoforte Sonata in F Minor, the Rondo from John Christian Bach's Pianoforte Sonata in E, the slow movement from C. P. Emanuel Bach's Pianoforte Sonata in G, and the first movement from Clementi's Sonata in E Flat. None of this music has been recorded before, and all of it was well worth recording. Samuel's playing is delightful, and the recording is beautifully clear and of excellent quality.

The second section, dealing with the string quartet, is illustrated by the Andante from Mozart's Quartet in D Minor (K. 421), played by the Lénér String Quartet. This is not new to the phonograph, both the Léners and the Flonzaleys having made recordings of the complete Quartet, but its inclusion in the album was a good choice, since it well carries out the purpose for which it was intended. Needless to say, the Léners play it exquisitely, and the recording is worthy of the lovely music and fine interpretation.

The second section deals with the symphony, the concerto and the overture. The first movement of Haydn's *Drum Roll* Symphony, a charming piece of music hitherto not electrically recorded, is played by a symphony orchestra conducted by Clarence Raybould. The orchestra used contains some notable names; those of Robert Murchie (flute), Leon Goossens (oboe), Haydn Draper (clarinet) and Aubrey Brain (horn) will be recalled as having frequently appeared on record labels, some in solos and some in chamber music discs. The Haydn movement is one of the most attractive things in the album.

The concerto form is illustrated by the slow movement from Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, played by Haydn Draper (clarinet) and the symphony orchestra led by Mr. Raybould. This music has not previously been recorded, and so has an additional value. Beethoven's *Fidelio* Overture, the fourth overture he wrote for his opera *Fidelio*, is played by Mr. Raybould and his competent orchestra. The

Overture has been recorded before, of course, but the version included in the history is the most satisfactory in that it boasts the finest recording.

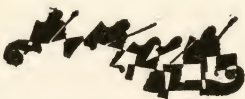
Vol. III is concluded with a group of Schubert songs and one by Loewe. Isobel Baillie sings *Margaret at the Spinning Wheel*, with piano accompaniment by Clarence Raybould; Harold Williams, accompanied by Herbert Dawson, sings *Memnon*; and *The Trout* is sung by Dorothy Stanton, accompanied by Gerald Moore. The Loewe song, *Prince Eugene*, is sung by Harold Williams, accompanied by Herbert Dawson. All of these songs are well sung and recorded and serve as excellent illustrations of Mr. Scholes' text.

The principal advantage of this series is that it makes the study of music a live and engrossing and vastly entertaining enterprise. It does not profess to make the subject easy, nor does it guarantee any quick results, but it does provide an excellent plan and method for the student bewildered by the formidable difficulties that seem to surround most histories of music. Mr. Scholes' path is not altogether easy, but it is a safe and rewarding one, and so following it cannot be too heartily recommended.

Vol. IV, now in preparation, will deal with music as romance and as national expression (the period of Weber, Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Brahms, Dvorák, Grieg and the Russians). Vol. V will consider music as drama (Monteverdi to Wagner and beyond), and Vol. VI, concluding the series, will deal with twentieth century music — impressionism, neo-romanticism, anti-romanticism (Debussy, Schönberg, Strawinski, etc.).

Exposed to these worthy albums, no one interested in music can fail to derive some benefit, not to mention inestimable enjoyment.

R. J. M.



Recorded Programs

[Such a vast quantity of good music is now available for the phonograph that quite frequently records of more than ordinary merit are overlooked. It will be the purpose of this page to call attention to such records. Readers are invited to send in their suggestions. Records which appeared prior to the appearance of Disques and hence have never been reviewed in these pages will be given preference. All types and makes will be considered, and an effort will be made to avoid the hackneyed and excessively familiar.]

BRAHMS "Von ewiger Liebe" & "Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer"

Elena Gerhardt (Mezzo-Soprano) with piano accompaniment (name omitted).

[One 12-inch disc (V-6755). \$2]

It is a revealing commentary on the musical sensibilities of America that this lovely record, only four numbers removed from an orchestral record (the Bach Toccata and Fugue, V-6751) which is (deservedly) a landmark in the phonographic repertory, should have been issued by Victor on one of its numerous "foreign" lists, and buried in oblivion. . . . Some of Brahms' most intimate and moving touches were reserved for his songs. *Von ewiger Liebe*, with its ringing climax of the girl comparing the strength of her love to the strength of steel, and *Immer leiser*, with its bittersweet resignation of the dying maiden: these both are as beautiful as anything in Brahms, which is almost to say, as anything in song. . . . Elena Gerhardt's name alone is guaranty of the quality of interpretation. To rate her *Von ewiger Liebe* barely ahead of Onegin's (V-7402) is to compliment both artists. *Immer leiser* is as well done. It has also been recorded by Kipnis (C-50182D) . . . The recording is acceptable, although lacking a little in volume.

R. W. S.

DOHNÁNYI

Suite, Op. 19

Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock.

[Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-47. \$6.50]

Just what qualities serve to separate "light" music from "serious" music is a problem that authority has not yet succeeded in solving satisfactorily. But if that music which is easy and pleasant to listen to is light music, then Dohnányi's Suite, Op. 19, falls very conveniently under the head. It is a work of such lightness, such bounce and charm and filled with so many jolly tunes that it would be hard to imagine anyone listening to it without thorough enjoyment. Dohnányi is no trail blazer. He uses no new and startling methods calculated to start the musical press buzzing. Probably he isn't of outstanding importance in the contemporary musical world. But he manages his materials with impressive ease and confidence; his mastery of orchestration, revealed in the attractive and colorful instrumental combinations he obtains, is always evident. And he manages to inject such life and gusto in his compositions that one can readily forgive him for not being a Strawinski or a Schönberg. There is a definite place for this amiable, well made, charming music. It may not be a place of overwhelming importance, but it is certainly not an insignificant one, for though there are many living composers whose aims and intentions are similar to Dohnányi's, there are few who succeed in carrying them out as admirably as he does . . . The Suite, recorded by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra several years ago, is immensely attractive, abounding with high spirits and, now and then, a gentle melancholy. Recording and performance are not only satisfactory; they would be hard to surpass.

ORCHESTRA



BEETHOVEN

C-68049D

CORIOLAN: *Overture*. Two sides. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 75.

Mengelberg is noted for his Beethoven readings, and appropriately enough much of his recording work has been devoted to works of Beethoven. The two symphonies he has recorded (the First and *Eroica*, made in this country with the Philharmonic-Symphony for Victor) were somewhat disappointing, but with the overtures he has fared much better. He has made excellent recordings of the *Leonore No. 1* and *No. 3* Overtures with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and the *Egmont* he has done electrically no less than three times, twice with the Concertgebouw and once with the Philharmonic-Symphony. The *Coriolan* he recorded twice for Columbia with the Amsterdam band. The first version, an early electrical recording, was done during the Beethoven centennial activities some five years ago; it was one of Mengelberg's first electrical discs. Now a new version of the piece, done by the same orchestra and conductor, appears.

The Overture deals not with the hero of Shakespeare's version of the tale, but with the hero of a drama by Heinrich Joseph von Collin, a contemporary of Beethoven. The Overture was composed in 1807. It has given rise to many literary interpretations, but the most sensible one of them all is perhaps Henry Edward Krehbiel's, and it deserves quotation:

One may forget both plays (those by Collin and by Shakespeare) while listening to Beethoven, and go back to Plutarch and the Greek tragic poets for the elements of the music. They are the monumental ones illustrated in the "Prometheus" of Æschylus and the "Œdipus" of Sophocles. Like Prometheus, Œdipus, Ajax and Pentheus, Coriolanus becomes insolent in his pride and goes to destruction. He is noble, kind, good, courageous, but vainglorious in his pride of ancestry, position and achievement; and he falls. The elements in his character to which Beethoven has given marvelously eloquent proclamation are his pride, which leads him to refuse to truckle to the plebian tribunes; his rage, which had stomach for the destruction of Rome; and his tenderness, which makes him yield to the tears of mother and wife and brings death to him. The moods are two: the first is published in the stupendous *unisono* C of the introduction and the angry principal subject; the second in the gentle and melodious second theme. The Overture dies with mutterings in the depths; with pride unbroken.

Mengelberg's interpretation is a fiery, vigorous one, well adapted to the mood of the music. It is a less restrained one than Pablo Casals' reading (recorded by H.M.V. and repressed by Victor). An interesting illustration of the improvements made in electrical recording is furnished by a comparison of the two Columbia recordings of the *Coriolan* Overture; one was recorded some five years back and the other only a few months ago, but both are by the same orchestra and conductor. The early Columbia recording is not at all bad, but compared with the new version it sounds weak and colorless, less like a real orchestra and more phonographic. The new recording is incomparably richer and fuller, and can be recommended as the most satisfactory version of the piece available.



ELGAR

V-DB1621

to

V-DB1624

IMPORTED

"FALSTAFF," *Symphonic Study with Two Interludes*, Op. 68.
Eight sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Edward
Elgar. Four 12-inch discs in album. \$8.

Now that *Falstaff* has reached the phonograph, practically all of the major instrumental works of Elgar have been recorded. With the possible exception of Richard Strauss, whose works have also been eagerly explored by the recording companies, no modern composer has been treated more generously. Moreover, few deserve this attention more justly than Elgar, whose works outside of England are pretty well neglected. One may, of course, cavil at the cheapness and triteness of many of the Elgar recordings; such sorry affairs as the *Crown of India* Suite, the *Sérénade Lyrique* and *Rosemary* neither add to Elgar's reputation nor enrich the phonograph repertoire. They could have been safely passed by. But one of the first things a record collector learns, and in this respect he has much in common with the concert-goer, is that all works are not masterpieces. We can well afford to put up with the above aberrations when it is remembered that, to make up for them, the companies have also given us superlative recordings of the two symphonies, the violin concerto and the *Enigma* Variations.

Falstaff belongs on the shelf close to Strauss' *Till Eulenspiegel* and his *Don Quixote* (this latter, it is true, is not as yet available, but it may be expected shortly). It deals not with the simple clown of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* but with the vastly more complex Falstaff of the historical plays, *Henry IV* and *V*; that Falstaff whom Maurice Morgann characterized as: "... a man at once young and old, enterprising and fat, a dupe and a wit, harmless and wicked, weak in principle and resolute by constitution, cowardly in appearance and brave in reality; a knave without malice, a liar without deceit; and a knight, a gentleman and a soldier, without either dignity, decency or honour."

A flyleaf in the album—from which the above quotation was taken—gives the notes on *Falstaff* that Elgar himself wrote for the *Musical Times* in 1913, when the work was produced at the Leeds Festival. *Falstaff* was the outcome of a thorough study by Elgar of the Shakespeare plays and criticism. His notes on the subject make an admirable preface to the records; the various themes are quoted and discussed, and everything necessary for an understanding of the music is clearly and simply set forth.

Elgar's depiction of Falstaff's development and decay is one of the finest things he has given us. The music is rich and mellow, full of gusto and a poignant, sensitive beauty that are equally satisfying to the ear and the heart. The orchestration offers additional proof of Elgar's mastery in this field, and it is always effective and in good taste. The performance, it will be noted, is conducted by Elgar himself, sure proof that it will be an admirable one. Elgar, even in the early days of electrical reproduction, has always been singularly successful in transcribing his works for the phonograph. Whether he understands the exigencies of the microphone uncommonly well, whether his works lend themselves to recording work better than most, or whether the H.M.V. engineers, impressed by Elgar's fame, strive to outdo themselves when he records, cannot, of course, be determined; perhaps the excellence

of these recordings results from a felicitous combination of all three factors. At any rate the fact remains that the Elgar discs—the two symphonies, the *Nursery Suite* and even the *Crown of India*—are among the most realistic recordings available.



Falstaff was made in the new H.M.V. studio at St. John's Wood; the clarity, color, proportion and delicacy of the reproduction offer eloquent proof that it is well adapted for recording work.

MOZART
V-11242

MARRIAGE OF FIGARO: *Overture*. One side and
IL SERAGLIO: *Overture*. One side. Vienna Philharmonic
Orchestra conducted by Clemens Krauss.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Scores: Philharmonia Nos. 13 and 47.

Both of these overtures have figured on records before, but they lend themselves to recording purposes so felicitously that it is impossible to deplore the duplication caused by the appearance of additional versions. The length and general characteristics of the music are of such a nature that, given satisfactory recording and an adequate performance, one can generally count on an excellent disc resulting. The two brief pieces are done here with a great amount of gusto and energy—perhaps, indeed, more than is altogether necessary. Lightness and grace are to a degree missing. The recording is the bold, forward, very brilliant kind, but it has a pleasing sense of spaciousness and freedom that ordinarily is not common among such discs. Extremely brilliant recordings are generally studio recordings, and they have a cramped, boxed-in feeling that is not noticeable in this disc. Especially deserving of praise is the clean-cut, convincing manner in which the solo instruments are reproduced. The Vienna Philharmonic plays zestfully under Krauss' hard-working baton. It is a disc that will seem outstanding to those who do not object to the conductor's vigorous readings. As for this reviewer, he must confess to a feeling of pleasure when listening to so much life and sparkle on a phonograph record, and accordingly the present one is recommended to your attention.

BACH
V-7553

"AUS DER TIEFE RUF EICH": *Choral Prelude*. Two sides.
Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The widespread demand for more Bach recordings by Stokowski has not gone unanswered by RCA-Victor, and this month the present record arrives just in time for inclusion in the August issue. Unfortunately, the late arrival of the disc makes it impossible to give it the space it deserves. The label doesn't indicate whether the piece is a Stokowski arrangement or not. There isn't time to check the matter, but the present reviewer can't recall ever having seen *Aus der Tiefe Rufe Ich* on a Philadelphia Orchestra program; in any case, it hasn't been played at all frequently, and so the recording is doubly valuable. It is a slow-moving, gently rolling piece, with a noble and profoundly moving melody. The glorious tone of the Philadelphia Orchestra's strings is magnificently displayed in the recording, and the disc will undoubtedly be ranked among the most successful of Stokowski's Bach records. In its way, it is as superb a recording as the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, and that, of course, is superlative praise.



ROUSSEL

PD-566126

to

PD-566128

IMPORTED

SYMPHONY NO. 3 in G Minor, Op. 42. Six sides. Lamoureux
Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff.
Three 12-inch discs in album. \$6.

Things are picking up in the recording field, both in America and Europe. So little has come from the foreign countries during the past winter that to have a symphony by a modern composer issued on records only a little over a year after its first public performance is as surprising as it is gratifying. Still more surprising and gratifying is the Symphony itself. Those who have heard the records of Roussel's *Le Festin de l'Araignée* and Suite in F would be justified in expecting a thoroughly workmanlike and competent piece of writing, one that would be pleasingly modern, yet without any of the excesses so alarming to cautious ears, but the work turns out to be much more than that. It was written for the fiftieth anniversary of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, observed during the season of 1930-31, and it was first played on October 24, 1930, in Boston under Koussevitzky's direction. The first European performance occurred a little over a year later—November 28, 1931, to be exact,—and the orchestra and conductor were the same that play it here on these records.

Albert Roussel ranks high among the modern French composers, and he has maintained his position for a number of years. He works along familiar lines and cannot be included among the more daring of his colleagues, but his work is seldom hackneyed or dull. He is no believer in the methods of the later Schönberg and has been quoted as saying: "Atonality I cannot feel or believe in, as it represents the relinquishment of tonality. And yet I have seen Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, which is purely atonal in workmanship and style, and I must say that I was impressed. Possibly atonalism—the negation of tonality—is more appropriate in the theatre, where sudden dramatic effects have to be made, than in the concert room. Anyhow, *Wozzeck* is a remarkable and very impressive score. *Wozzeck* is against my ideas of music, but *Wozzeck* is a work of a form, a manner, and inspiration all its own. *Ergo*, we composers have principally to do one thing: hold to our faith, labor with care and conscience, and continue our appointed way."

The Symphony given here is written in classical form and has the usual four movements. A figure used during the climax of the first movement is also employed during the second and last movements, and it is heard again at the close of the work. The short first movement (one record side) begins buoyantly, with a fine swing. The slow movement (two record sides) contains a skilfully written fugue. The third movement (one record side) is brief but charming, and the last movement (two record sides), with its light but robust touch, closes the work appropriately. Roussel's crisp, compact, orderly writing makes for a singularly balanced score. Its incisive, clean-cut measures indicate a cool and resourceful mind, one that moves forward in a confident manner, unhampered by muddled thinking. It is not a work that will move profoundly or impress deeply, nor is it likely to cause any heated controversies, but it is most certainly a symphony whose sincerity, charm, polish and light, deft touch are sure to provide a great deal of pleasure.

The performance deserves high praise and is one of the best that Wolff and the Lamoureux have given us. The recording is worthy of the performance.

IBERT

C-68050D
and
C-68051D

ESCALES: *Suite for Orchestra*. Four sides. Orchestre des Concerts Straram conducted by Walther Straram.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.



Escales appeared in the imported pressings nearly two years ago, and served to introduce the then unfamiliar orchestra conducted by Walther Straram. Moreover, it brought the first major work of Ibert's to be recorded before the attention of the phonograph audience. Since then, oddly enough, nothing more of Ibert's has tempted the recorders. The records of *Escales* were reviewed in considerable detail in the September, 1930, issue of *Disques*. For those whose files of the magazine don't go back that far, it might be well briefly to summarize that notice here. *Escales*, or *Ports of Call*, was written during the years 1920-22, when the composer was in his early thirties. It resulted from a voyage he made in the Mediterranean. Three popular tunes—an Italian melody, an Oriental tune, and a Hispano-Moorish melody—which the composer heard while on the cruise remained in his memory, and in his *Escales* he makes effective use of them. The work is in three sections: Rome-Palermo, in which the Italian melody appears; Tunis-Nefta, where the Oriental tune is used; and Valencia, which makes use of the Hispano-Moorish melody.

The colorful first movement, clearly showing the influence of Debussy, is immensely attractive, with its fine orchestral touches and felicitous writing for the flute. The brief second movement, with its Oriental effects, is somewhat less striking, but the last movement closes the work appropriately in a blaze of color. It is music that has an immediate appeal; its numerous happy effects and graceful orchestral touches testify to Ibert's mastery of the orchestra and reveal him to be a composer of impeccable taste. The performance by the Straram Orchestra is exemplary, and the recording is on the same high level.

SUPPÉ

C-G2666D

BANDITENSTREICHE: *Overture*. Two sides. Dajos Bela Concert Orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Save for a pleasant tune or so, there is nothing here. The music is noisy, heavy-handed, and commonplace. The performance is satisfactory, but the recording in places could be somewhat better.

CHARPENTIER

PD-67035
and
PD-67036

IMPRESSIONS D'ITALIE. Four sides. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

IMPORTED

This work, composed in 1887, is in five divisions, but only two of them—On Mule-Back and Naples—are included above. An earlier recording, conducted by the composer for Odeon, gives the entire suite. Charpentier's musical eulogy of Italy may be put alongside of Tschaikowsky's *Capriccio Italien*; both are conventionally colorful and romantic, with serenades and lively dance tunes predominating. The two movements here rendered give Albert Wolff and the Lamoureux



Orchestra an excellent opportunity to make the loudspeaker thunder and roar, and they do it very competently, ably assisted by the recorders, who nearly always make a good job of this organization's discs. The reproduction, indeed, is the main feature of this otherwise not very exciting set.

DELIBES

V-B3941

IMPORTED

COPPELIA BALLET: (a) *Mazurka*. (b) *Czardas*. Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugène Goossens. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

SULLIVAN

V-C2308

IMPORTED

DI BALLO: *Overture*. Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

V-C2372

and

V-C2373

IMPORTED

PETITE SUITE DE CONCERT. Four sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

Light music is fairly well represented this month with these pieces by Delibes, Sullivan and Coleridge-Taylor. The Delibes record is a bright, sparkling and well recorded disc of this familiar but always charming music . . . The *Di Ballo* Overture was given in 1870 at the Birmingham Festival and so preceded the immortal operettas upon which Sullivan's chief claim to fame is based. It is a pleasant work and makes effective use of dance rhythms; the London Symphony, under Dr. Sargent, who usually conducts the D'Oyly Carte recordings of the G. & S. operettas, plays it satisfactorily. The recording is not outstanding, but it has no serious flaws . . . Coleridge-Taylor's *Hiawatha* has been recorded, but little else of his has. His list of works runs to eighty-two opus numbers, of which the *Petite Suite de Concert* is No. 77. There are four sections: *La Caprice de Nanette*, *Demande et reponse*, *Un Sonnet d'amour*, and *La tarantelle*. All are mildly pleasing and effective, but none of them is distinguished by any particularly striking qualities. The performance and recording are adequate.

GROFÉ

V-36052

to

V-36055

GRAND CANYON *Suite*. Eight sides. Paul Whiteman and his Concert Orchestra. Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set C-18. \$5.50.

V-L35001

and

V-L35002

GRAND CANYON *Suite*. Four sides. Long-playing version. Two 12-inch long-playing discs. \$2.25 each.

These records, now included on the Victor August supplement, were reviewed last month on page 208. Both long-playing and standard versions are recorded magnificently, and there is no appreciable difference in the reproduction of the two sets.

CARPENTER

V-11250

to

V-11252

SKYSCRAPERS: *A Ballet of Modern American Life*. Six sides.
Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret.
Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-130. \$5.



V-L11618

and

V-L10000

SKYSCRAPERS. Three sides. Long-playing version.
One 12-inch disc: \$3. One 12-inch single-faced disc: \$1.50.

The amazing recording boom recently inaugurated by RCA Victor—a boom almost beyond belief for these times, and hence all the more to be praised—has not only produced some records of music that abundantly deserved to be recorded, but it has also given well earned space in the catalogues to John Alden Carpenter. His *Song of Faith*, in both standard and long-playing versions, was released only a couple of months ago, and now his *Skyscrapers* appears just in time to be reviewed in this issue of *Disques*. Though the official release date is set for the end of next month, the records are now available.

The fabulous period that produced Mr. Carpenter's "Ballet of Modern American Life" has now passed, though only so recently that the music is easily recognizable and still possesses plenty of relevant features. The sort of American that Mr. Carpenter celebrates in *Skyscrapers* undoubtedly lived, eight years ago (when the music was written), a life consisting essentially of "violent alternations of Work and Play," and his leisure was probably spent in a world of "Ferris wheels and side-shows and hot dogs." But this same American's manner of living has undergone some important changes in those eight years. Very likely he is now either hungry or shortly will be, and so can only rarely enjoy his former luxuries. When he plays, it is not with the carefree and happy gusto of a few years ago, and his greasy, mustard-covered hot dog is a meal instead of a sudden whim; as for his work, it has largely disappeared, though where, no one seems to know. The gaudiness and cheap tinsel of his former life have now been replaced by actual want and misfortune. So that it is perhaps best to eliminate the subtitle of Mr. Carpenter's ballet, for it no longer applies so appositely as it once did, and instead just retain the title *Skyscrapers*.

Skyscrapers was originally written for Diaghileff, but the plan fell through, and the work was secured by Mr. Gatti-Casazza, of the New York Metropolitan Opera Company. It was produced at the Metropolitan on February 19, 1926, and it has also been given in Munich under the title *Wolkenkratzer*. Since its first production, *Skyscrapers* has appeared on the programs of the leading American orchestras as a separate concert piece—in the form that it is given on these records. The following synopsis of the work was prepared by the composer: "Scene 1—Symbols of restlessness; Scene 2—An abstraction of the skyscraper and of the work that produces it—and the interminable crowd that passes by; Scene 3—The transition from work to play; Scene 4—Any 'Coney Island,' and a reflection of a few of its manifold activities—interrupted presently by a 'throw-back,' in the movie sense, to the idea of work, and reverting with equal suddenness to play; Scene 5—The return from play to work; Scene 6—*Skyscrapers*." These sections, however, are not indicated on the record labels. The orchestra used is an interesting



one and is as follows: three flutes (one interchangeable with a piccolo), three oboes (one interchangeable with an English horn), three clarinets (one interchangeable with a double-bassoon), three saxophones, four horns, four trumpets, three trombones, bass tuba, two pianos, tenor banjo, celesta, xylophone, kettle-drums, bass drum, cymbals, oriental drum, side drum, tambourine, anvils, wood-block, gong, glockenspiel, cylinder bells and strings.

Jazz, "filtered through the symphonic orchestra" (the composer's phrase) and also "filtered through the imagination of a musician who brings to his perilous task the skill and resourcefulness of a fine craftsman, the wit and salt of a sagacious, humane and sensitive artist, and the gusto of a true fantasist" (Lawrence Gilman's words), naturally occupies much of the work. Like the life it sets out to depict, the music is clangorous and noisy, bewildered and restless, changing abruptly from one mood to another. It is all handled with ease and skill, and the orchestration has considerable novelty and effectiveness. The rhythms are crisp and lively, the tunes gay and jaunty. It is a score that sparkles and moves forward as vividly and colorfully as the events it is supposed to describe. The life that Mr. Carpenter deals with may be largely a thing of the past, but the tastes and desires that gave rise to that manner of living are still with us, and they are reflected in the music. Perhaps the chief fault of the score is that "filtering" process mentioned by Mr. Gilman and the composer. The work isn't sufficiently rowdy to possess complete conviction; it is excessively refined and elaborate, as if Mr. Carpenter, fascinated by the vast resources at his disposal but hesitating to let himself go without restraint, compromised by toying pleasantly with his large orchestra, cleverly utilizing some of the superficial features of jazz but missing its essential spirit. One feels that the same results could have been achieved more economically, and that the score would consequently have been better welded and more compactly knit. Spread over six record surfaces, one begins to tire of so much clever but essentially meaningless detail; like Coney Island, it is amusing and exhilarating for a time, but like Coney Island again, one soon gets enough.

At any rate, it is an uncommonly interesting release, capitably played and recorded, and one hopes that those who have been demanding more Carpenter discs will respond in the only proper manner: by purchasing the album. And if one entertains some doubts as to the complete authenticity of the composition, there can be none about the deft and pointed interpretation given the work by the Victor Symphony under the versatile Mr. Shilkret. It would be hard to imagine finer, cleaner, and more life-like recording, and the record surfaces, like all recent Victor surfaces, are pleasingly quiet and smooth. The work was reviewed from the standard records; review copies of the long-playing version haven't yet reached us.

GLAZOUNOW

PD-27279

IMPORTED

VALE DE CONCERT, Op. 47. Two sides. Berlin State Opera
Orchestra conducted by Alois Melichar.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

This concert waltz was recorded several years ago by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra for Victor. It is not a very exciting piece, and lacks the fine gusto and compelling swing of a Strauss waltz. The San Francisco version was satisfactory. This one is equally so, and perhaps the recording is a shade cleaner and more refined than that in the earlier disc.

CONCERTO



BACH

V-7502

to

V-7504

CONCERTO FOR TWO VIOLINS in *D Minor*. Arnold Rosé (Violin), Alma Rosé (Violin) and chamber orchestra. Five sides and

SONATA IN G MINOR: *Adagio*. One side. Arnold Rosé (Violin).

Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-123. \$6.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 727.

The unexpected arrival of this set—just as we were going to press—saves the month from being put down as a rather dull one so far as the domestic releases are concerned. The Double Concerto in D Minor was recorded by Victor in acoustical days; Kreisler and Zimbalist, assisted by a string quartet, were the artists. It was a beautifully played recording, but naturally it suffered from the usual shortcomings of the acoustical records.

The Concerto, it is believed, dates from the period when Bach lived at Cöthen (1717-1723), serving in the capacity of Kapellmeister and director of chamber music to Prince Leopold. Of the violin concertos written by Bach, we have two for solo violin and orchestra and the Double Concerto given here. These concertos are duplicated in clavier versions: that is, the E Major Violin Concerto is the D Major Concerto for clavier; the A Minor Violin Concerto is similar to that in G Minor for clavier and orchestra; and the Double Concerto corresponds to No. 3 of the set of concertos for two claviers and orchestra. This duplication has caused scholars considerable anxiety and speculation. Some, like Spitta, deny that Bach arranged the violin concertos as works for clavier and orchestra simply because he did not want to write new clavier concertos, claiming that he "felt that the style of his violin concertos was so much moulded by his clavier style that their true nature could be fully brought out only in the shape of clavier concertos." Others, like Schweitzer, take the view that Bach "needed clavier concertos when he directed the Telemann Society," and that the "transcriptions are of unequal worth. Some were made carefully and with art, while others betray impatience in the accomplishment of an uninteresting task."

The present recording does justice to the music, and that is the essential thing. Arnold and Alma Rosé, in the solo parts, play with distinction, and a small chamber orchestra provides a competent accompaniment. The quick-paced *Vivace*, with which the work opens, is done carefully but surely not pedantically, and the serenity and profound beauty of the *Largo ma non tanto* are well displayed on these records. The last record side, concluding the *Allegro*, contains a cadenza by Joseph Helmesberger.

On the odd side of the set Arnold Rosé plays the broad, expansive *Adagio* from the Sonata in G Minor—the same Sonata that Joseph Szigeti recorded so superlatively for Columbia some months back. The entire set is satisfactorily recorded, and can be recommended with somewhat more than the customary amount of enthusiasm.



PIANO

SCARLATTI

V-B4076

IMPORTED

SONATA IN G MAJOR. One side and
SONATA IN A MINOR. One side. Mark Hambourg. (Piano).
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

These are delightful little pieces, but Mr. Hambourg's treatment of them is rather heavy-handed, spoiling their delicacy and quaint charm. The excellent recording is thus not much of an asset to the disc, making the pianist's somewhat jarring interpretations even more unsatisfying.



CHAMBER MUSIC

POCHON

V-1569

(a) TURKEY IN THE STRAW. (b) OLD ZIP COON.
(Arr. Alfred Pochon) One side and
SALLY IN OUR ALLEY (*Old English Tune*). (Arr. Alfred
Pochon) One side. Flonzaley Quartet.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

The far too occasional releases of the Flonzaley Quartet are now the only tangible reminders of the organization's once supreme position in the field of chamber music, for now that it no longer is in existence, the records made before it disbanded furnish the only way by which one can judge the quality of this fine quartet's playing. No doubt there are some who will be mildly astonished at the titles of this latest release; the Flonzaley's discs generally carry the names of Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, or Schumann on their labels. Mr. Pochon's arrangements are so effective, however, and the interpretations so lively that the record makes a highly entertaining novelty. *Turkey in the Straw*, of course, needs no introduction. The deft, nimble performance given it here, combining the Flonzaley's almost unbelievable polish with a pleasing and altogether appropriate gusto, make the piece sound immensely attractive. Much the same is true of *Old Zip Coon*, another familiar tune given a similarly exhilarating performance. The recording is excellent. . . . *Sally in Our Alley*, another tune which time seems unable to destroy, is well played and recorded too, and makes an appropriate selection for the reverse side.

RAVEL

V-11243

to

V-11245

TRIO in A Minor. Six sides. M. Merkel (Violin), Madeleine
Marcelli-Herson ('Cello) and Eliane Zurfluh-Tenroc (Piano).
Three 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-129. \$5.

This is the first, and thus far only, recording of the Ravel Trio, and the set appeared in this country recently as an importation from France. It was noticed in the April issue of *Disques*. The music is charming, with all of the clarity, order,

elegance and crispness that make Ravel at his best a composer well worth attending. The performers, apparently appearing here for the first time as an ensemble for recording purposes, are extraordinarily good. Each one is unquestionably competent, and they work together admirably. The recording is superb.



OPERA



**DARGOM-
WIZHISKY**
V-DB1531
IMPORTED

ROUSSALKA: *Mad Scene and Death of the Miller.* Two sides. Fyodor Chaliapine (Bass) and Pzomkovsky (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by M. Steimann. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

**RIMSKY-
KORSAKOW**
PD-566124
IMPORTED

SADKO: *Air de Bousslaevna.* One side and
SNIEGOUROTCHKA: *Troisième chanson.* One side Hélène Sadoven (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by M. Kitschine. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

These discs, offering selections from Russian operas, present a pleasant contrast to the sort of operatic records that ordinarily fill the companies' supplements. Alexander Dargomwizhsky had a salient part in the history of Russian opera. He was born at Toula in 1813 and died at St. Petersburg in 1869. The *Roussalka* (Watersprite), with a libretto based on Pushkin's dramatic legend, was produced in St. Petersburg in 1856, but the novelty of its treatment was not appreciated by a public already saturated with Italian opera. Here the Mad Scene and Death of the Miller from Act 3 is given. It is a superb record in every respect. The music is expressive and moving, and the rendition equally so. Chaliapine sings magnificently, and there is an admirable tenor whose first name is missing from the record label. The orchestra comes out extremely well, and in fact is one of the features of the disc . . . The Rimsky-Korsakow selections are very attractive, too. The singer has a voice of great natural charm and she employs it intelligently. Here again there are first-rate orchestral accompaniments and good recording.

**DONIZETTI
VERDI**
V-7552

LA FAVORITA: *Splendon piu belle.* (Donizetti) One side and
ERNANI: *Infelice e tu credevi.* (Verdi) One side. Ezio Pinza (Basso) with Metropolitan Opera Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Giulio Setti. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Pinza's fine bass voice is the outstanding feature of this record which is otherwise not marked by any distinguishing qualities. In the *Favorita* selection Pinza is assisted by the chorus and orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera, but their work hardly rises above the level of a good routine performance. Nor is the recording more than fair. The *Ernani* piece, save for Pinza's admirable singing, is similarly dull. Here the singer is backed up by the orchestra without the chorus.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF

AUGUST

JOHANN STRAUSS—CONCERT WALTZES—No. II (ALBUM No. 37)

- | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 90232 | { | WINE, WOMEN AND SONG—Parts I and II
(Wein, Weib, Gesang)
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
Robert Heger, Conductor | } | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90233 | { | MORNING PAPERS—Parts I and II
(Morgenblätter)
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
Robert Heger, Conductor | } | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90234 | { | ARTIST'S LIFE—Parts I and II
(Künstlerleben)
THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
Robert Heger, Conductor | } | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90235 | { | SONGS OF LOVE—Parts I and II
(Liebeslieder-Walzer)
THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
Julius Prüwer, Conductor | } | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 90236 | { | VIENNESE BONBONS—Parts I and II
(Wiener Bonbons)
THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
Alois Melichar, Conductor | } | Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |

Brunswick Records

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VOCAL



**TOSTI
BRUNEAU**
C-50330D

NINON. (Tosti) Georges Thill (Tenor) with piano accompaniment by Maurice Faure. One side and
L'ATTAQUE DU MOULIN: *Adieux à la forêt*. (Bruneau)
One side. Georges Thill (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Alfred Bruneau. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Tosti song is a commonplace tune, sung in a fresh, clear tenor voice. Thill's singing is the most satisfactory feature of this selection. . . . The selection on the reverse side is taken from Bruneau's opera *L'Attaque du moulin*, the book of which was based on Zola's *Soirées de Medan*. This opera, dealing with war, enjoyed considerable popularity in Paris, the French provinces and London. The excerpt sung by Thill, with an orchestral accompaniment directed by the composer, is not very appealing music, and Thill's voice sounds here rather strained and labored.

**YRADIER
DE CURTIS**
C-G4069M

LA PALOMA. (Yradier) One side and
MEMORIES OF SORRENTO. (De Curtis) One side.
Richard Tauber (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

HILDACH
C-G9054M

LENZ. One side and
DER SPIELMANN. One side. Lotte Lehmann (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by Manfred Gurlitt. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Tauber this month sings songs of a Spanish flavor. Both are well known and need no comment. In *La Paloma*, near the end, he takes off his coat and sails in with hearty enthusiasm, bringing the piece to a rousing finish. *Memories of Sorrento* is also attractively rendered. Dr. Weissmann provides good orchestral accompaniments, in which mandolins and castanets figure largely. The recording is satisfactory. . . . The subjects of the Hildach songs, *Spring* and the *Fiddler*, gave the composer ample opportunity to wax sentimental, but he kept it within decent bounds, and so the result is not unpleasant. Especially not the way Lotte Lehmann sings, for her beautiful voice is heard to excellent advantage on the disc.

MAHLER
PD-95469
IMPORTED

RHINE LEGEND. One side and
THE DRUMMER BOY. One side. Heinrich Schlusnus (Bari-
tone) with Berlin Opera Orchestra conducted by Hermann Weigert. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Gustav Mahler's neglect by the recording companies is well known. All the more welcome, then, so attractive a disc as this one. These songs come from the *Lieder des Knaben Wunderhorn*, written in 1890. The *Rhine Legend* is a charming piece, with its slow waltz rhythm and striking treatment, and the martial swing of the *Drummer Boy* is no less appealing. Schlusnus, needless to say, sings both songs beautifully, and the orchestral accompaniment is capably played by the Berlin State Opera men under Hermann Weigert. The recording is praiseworthy.

—New Issues—

Columbia Masterworks*



BEETHOVEN: CORIOLAN: OVERTURE. Beethoven's great overture to Coriolanus is based not on the Shakespeare tragedy but on a play of that name by Heinrich Joseph von Collin, who was contemporary with Beethoven. However, the origin of the story is the same and the force and might of the proud Roman are vividly expressed in the master's music; there is also the gentleness of the victorious general toward his mother who implores him to spare Rome from destruction, which he does, afterwards yielding up his life for his forbearance. Manifestly, *Coriolanus*, in its wide sweep and dramatic power, is one of the greatest overtures of the ages. It

was written about 1810, in the flood tide of Beethoven's genius. Mengelberg's is a dramatic, compelling performance of this noble work.

Beethoven: Coriolan: Overture. Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. In Two Parts, on One Twelve-Inch Record, 68049-D, \$2.00.

IBERT: ESCALES—SUITE FOR ORCHESTRA. The music of Jacques Ibert is alive with color—it has the sparkling charm of sunlight. His most considerable orchestral work, *Escala (Ports of Call)* was inspired by a journey through the Mediterranean, in the course of which the composer was strongly impressed by characteristic street tunes heard at various stopping places. The three episodes are labelled *Rome-Palermo, Tunis-Nefta, Valencia*. A truly fascinating and delightful work, perfectly recorded.

Ibert, one of the youngest of contemporary composers to be represented in Columbia Masterworks, was born in Paris in 1890. He entered the Conservatory at a comparatively early age, under the tutelage of André Gedalge, to whom most of the best musicians of France during the past half century owe an eternal debt. Ibert did his part in the war and at its close returned to the Conservatory, winning the Prix de Rome in 1919. A strong admirer of Debussy and Ravel, he based his highly individualistic impressionistic idiom upon the foundation they had built, though far from being in any sense imitative. For ideas the lure of the Mediterranean lands holds him strongly.

Ibert: Escala—Suite for Orchestra. Walther Straram and Orchestre des Concerts Straram. In Four Parts, on Two Twelve-Inch Records, 68050-D and 68051-D, \$1.50 each.



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{ CHANSON INDOUE *from Sadko*. (Rimsky-Korsakow) One side and
MARTA. (L. Wolfe Gilbert-Moises Simons) One side. Beniamino Gigli (Tenor) with orchestra.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.



Returning to recording work after some months' absence, Gigli begins with Rimsky's much battered and thrice familiar *Song of India*. In selecting recording material, tenors aren't noticeably superior to fiddlers. The piece itself has been sung so often that it would take an extraordinary rendition to make it sound at all fresh and new. Mr. Gigli's interpretation, while probably competent, certainly doesn't increase one's enthusiasm for the piece . . . On the reverse side is a pleasant tune called *Marta*, but Mr. Gigli's grandiose singing, embellished with elegant sobs, seems out of place on so simple a song.

**KERN
SPEAKS**

V-1571

{ OL' MAN RIVER. (Hammerstein-Kern) One side and
SYLVIA. (Scollard-Speaks) One side. John Charles Thomas (Baritone) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**WOLF
DUNN**

V-1568

{ ANACREONS GRAB. (Wolf) One side and
THE BITTERNESS OF LOVE. (O'Sheel-Dunn) One side. John McCormack (Tenor) with piano accompaniment by Edwin Schneider. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Ol' Man River, as everyone knows, comes from *Show Boat*, recently revived with great success in New York. Mr. Thomas' rendition is overly dramatic and there is a too studied attempt to achieve "effectiveness," thereby destroying the poignance and simple charm of the music. *Sylvia* is sung more simply and will please Mr. Thomas' numerous admirers . . . The McCormack disc is notable for the fine rendition of *Anacreons Grab*, spoken of in last month's Recorded Programs. The *Bitterness of Love* is rather a let-down after the Wolf.

ORGAN



BACH

C-G7174M

{ PRELUDE IN E MINOR. One side and
FUGUE IN E MINOR. One side. Louis Vierne (Organ).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

The organ has been rather neglected by the companies in recent months, so that this Vierne release is well timed. Organ recording, despite the increasing improvements, still lacks the realism of recordings of other instruments. Now and then, of course, an example of organ recording comes along that is far in advance of other organ discs, but such records are extremely rare. Vierne, playing on the organ of Notre Dame, Paris, is of course an admirable performer, and he has made several outstanding discs. His rendition of these two Bach works is praiseworthy.

New Victor Releases

MUSICAL MASTERPIECE SERIES

Trio in A Minor by Maurice Ravel. Played by M. Merckel (violin); Mme. Marcelli-Herson ('cello); and Mlle. Zurfluh-Tenroc (piano) . . . on three double-faced 12-inch Victor records Nos. 11243-11245 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 11246-11248. In Album M-129, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$5.00.

The most delightful music imaginable is the *Trio in A Minor* . . . a choice morsel indeed for the lover of chamber music who has a penchant for the modern. It has all the subtleties of harmony and rhythm that identify the composer at once, and its diversity assures a lasting interest. Particularly intriguing is "Pantoum," the second of the four movements.

Grand Canyon by Ferdie Grofé. Played by Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra on four double-faced black label Victor records Nos. 36052-36055 . . . and in automatic sequence Nos. 36056-36059. In Album C-18. List price, \$5.50. Also Long-Playing records L-35001 and L-35002. List price, \$2.25 each.

In his suite GRAND CANYON, Ferdie Grofé has not only symbolized the melodic expression of the nation, but one of its physiological phenomena as well. Grofé's musical light—long submerged under the bushel of an orchestral arranger—gleams brightly in this, his latest and most ambitious composition. Of the five movements, the third, *On the Trail*, is exceptionally realistic. Here is music about America . . . for Americans . . . by an American!

RED SEAL RECORDS

Chanson Indoue (from "Sadko") and *Marta*. Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Beniamino Gigli on Victor Record No. 1570. List price, \$1.50.

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Old Zip Coon and

Sally in Our Alley. Played by the Flonzaley Quartet on Victor Record No. 1569. List price, \$1.50.



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IMPORTED

FOLIES D'ESPAGNE (*Theme and Variations*). Four sides.
Andres Segovia (Guitar).
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Segovia's guitar records always make notable releases, and for several reasons. Quite apart from his amazing skill with the instrument and the lack of good guitar records, these discs have another happy feature, and that is the recording. The *Folia* or *Folies d'Espagne* is an ancient Portuguese dance, and many composers have made striking use of it, among them being Vivaldi, Corelli, Lully, Pergolesi, Keiser, Bach, Grétry, Cherubini, etc. The work Segovia records is alternately lively and languorous. But the main feature here is Segovia's performance and the good recording; the music is of secondary interest.

BACH

V-DA1129

IMPORTED

ENGLISH SUITE IN E MINOR: *Passepied*. One side and
FANTASIA IN C MINOR. One side. Wanda Landowska
(Harpichord). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

A new release by Wanda Landowska is always an event of some importance, and whatever anticipation this record may have given rise to is amply justified. The movement from the English Suite is charming, while the Fantasia is brilliant and impressive in the extreme. Wanda Landowska's playing in both is notable; in the former there is the necessary delicacy and lightness of touch, and in the latter she displays extraordinary power. The recording matches the beauty of the music and interpretation. An article on Landowska, by Nicolas Slonimsky, will be found elsewhere in this issue.

V-36060

USEFUL PHRASES IN ENGLISH-SPANISH. Two sides.
Rex Palmer and J. Vicente Barragán.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

A record similar in idea to this disc was reviewed in the June issue. That disc dealt with useful phrases in English and German. Here Mr. Palmer speaks a phrase in English and Mr. Barragán repeats it in Spanish. The phrases deal with situations that might arise while traveling, and a printed leaflet, giving the English and Spanish of the phrases spoken on the record, is included with the disc.

V-V5529

to

V-V5531

FRENCH TALES AND DIALOGUES. Six sides. Camille
Vièrè, Emile Stéphan and Marcel Ruff.
Three 10-inch discs. 75c each.

The title of these discs sufficiently indicates the idea behind them. Recorded in Paris, they should be of great value in schools and for those who are studying the French language. Printed leaflets accompany the records, giving the French that is spoken on the discs and an English translation. The recording is admirably clear and distinct.

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CORRESPONDENCE



The Manufacturer's Viewpoint

Editor, *Disques*:

I think I am justified in resenting and regarding as unfair certain criticisms of policy leveled at record manufacturers in the editorials of the July issue of your admirable magazine *Disques*.

As I began to read this article I was struck with its apparent tolerance and understanding of the problems faced these days by record producers, but the sentence which opens the second section is certainly an affront, particularly to us who have in the past few months been hazarding great sums of money as well as other valuables in an effort to make available to record buyers the best of music—whether it be as new as Schönberg or as popular as Bach.

In counting up a number of what you call good records it should not be necessary to eliminate from the catalogues repressings from European companies for, in many cases, works for the recording of which you credit an European subsidiary are often done at the insistence of the American Company and made in Europe for economic and other reasons.

It might, therefore, be somewhat discouraging to find our efforts greeted with such a patronizing attitude were it not for the fact that we are conscious of what we have done, what we are doing and what we are going to do along the lines of recording unusual music. Would you seriously suggest that the musical value of *Wozzeck* or *H.P.* would justify the expense of recording them? You will note that we speak of their musical not their commercial value. Or, do you suppose that financial consideration is a yardstick by which we measure the suitability of important music for recording? If so, you are certainly and emphatically wrong in both cases.

It is perfectly true, as you say, that our business is to make money and we are happy to say that we are accomplishing that purpose. It is a curious and encouraging fact that the demand for records generally has been maintained with remarkable steadiness throughout the depression, which would seem to indicate that in normal times the circulation of recorded music would be much greater than it now is. But I am afraid that if we

were to depend upon the vociferous minority that so ardently cries for the new and the different and so frequently becomes mute when the new and different are offered by their dealers we would be in a much less happy state.

One more riposte and I am done—Your criticism of the unfortunate breaks in the standard set of *Gurre-Lieder* is not unjustified. You say that "the worse possible places were chosen to stop."—As a matter of fact few if any of these places were chosen at all. As you may recall, the standard set is the performance of Monday night—we made a standard set also on Friday afternoon in which the breaks, with one or two exceptions, were almost ideal. The long-playing set was made on Saturday night, and the Monday night performance caused us some confusion when we found that Mr. Stokowski's tempi were greatly at variance with those of the two previous performances and all our carefully marked scores were useless.

Making a break in a recording made at an actual performance is not the simple matter it may seem to be; it involves more than merely the throwing of a switch. The second recording machine cannot be instantly stopped or started and several varying time elements enter into the transfer of sound from one record to another. In the long-playing *Gurre-Lieder* set the breaks are made more satisfactorily because the score had been studied and the performance was parallel to the rehearsals during which we timed the music.

Long-playing records do not offer much more freedom or ease to the recorder than the short records. Their only advantage lies in the fact that during the playing more time is given to study of the score for a possible break. I think you exaggerate grossly when you say "often a singer is cut short in the middle of a note." This happened once or twice at the most and out of twenty-eight sides that is not a bad average considering the conditions under which the work was done.

We will improve—thanks, no doubt, to your scolding.

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The subscription list for the Haydn Quartet Society is now open and will remain open until August 15th for those who wish to subscribe for the first album. It will contain three Haydn Quartets (Quartet in C, Op. 20, No. 2; Quartet in C, Op. 33, No. 3 and Quartet in G, Op. 77, No. 1) played by the Pro Arte Quartet on seven 12-inch records. The price complete with album is \$14.00. There will be no charge for postage or insurance anywhere in U. S. A.

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NEW MUSIC

"OPUS CLAVICEMBALISTICUM" for Piano. By Kaikhosru Sorabji. London: J. Curwen & Sons, Ltd. 2 guineas.

This amazing work consists of 252 pages and is probably the longest single composition for piano in history. Its three parts consist of the following numbers: (1) Introito; (2) Preludio corale; (3) Fuga; (4) Fantasia; (5) Fuga a due soggetti; (6) Interludium Primum (Theme with forty-nine variations); (7) Cadenza; (8) Fuga a tre soggetti; (9) Interludium alterium (Toccata, Adagio, Passacaglia with eighty-one variations); (10) Cadenza; (11) Fuga a quattro soggetti; (12) Coda stretta. Although the book is a tour de force of remarkable musical ingenuity and contrapuntal scholarship, the music is far from being merely of the didactic or austere order. The main themes brought out in the introduction possess dramatic and rhythmic vigor and are always enveloped in contrapuntal figurations. The thickness of the polyphony necessitated the placing of the notes in three staves and sometimes in four and five. The technical difficulties are enormous and that may account for the undue neglect of Sorabji's piano music. It would require a super-pianist to do justice to the rhythmical complexities of the Adagio section, to mention one instance. The only other number of the modern school that comes to mind in reviewing the *Opus Clavicembalisticum* is the *Fantasia Contrapuntistica* of Ferruccio Busoni, but that is simplicity itself compared to Sorabji's opus. It is our firm belief that every serious student of modern music ought to possess these two volumes, for the sake of their educational value if for nothing else.

SONATINA for Piano. By Boris Koutzen. Philadelphia: Elkan-Vogel Co. (*La Sirène Musicale*). \$1.60.

The rhythmic brightness of the themes and their logical development make of this Sonatina a grateful number for public performance. It is thoroughly pianistic, and the feeling of spontaneity is never absent, in spite of its ultra-modernistic harmonic and polyphonic freedom of treatment.

A SECOND BOOK OF CHORALES. By J. S. Bach. Boston: E. C. Schirmer Co. 75c.

The album contains twenty-eight chorales

of Bach that were selected and provided with suitable English texts by Thomas Whitney Surette. The edition is very neat and will be found useful by choral societies.

TRIPTIQUE for 'Cello and Piano. By Jean Maklakiervicz. New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (*Max Eschig Edition*). \$1.

The three pieces entitled *Spring Eclogue* will be welcomed by 'cellists as a worthy contribution to the concert literature of their instrument. The melancholic lyricism of the first two numbers (1. Snow-drops; 2. Linely-tice) is especially appealing, while the lively last piece (*Pâques fleuries*) serves to dispel the gloom of the preceding numbers and makes a good contrast to them. It is time for 'cellists to quit playing so many transcriptions and become interested more in the original literature of their instrument.

TWO CHORAL PRELUDES. By J. S. Bach. Transcribed for piano by Wilhelm Kempff. New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (*Ed. Bote & G. Bock Edition*). 90c.

These two transcriptions of the organ choral preludes, *Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland* and *Wachet auf! ruft uns die Stimme*, differ only slightly from Busoni's arrangements of the same works. In both Bach's polyphony and counterpoint are carefully preserved and no extraneous matter added. At the end of the second prelude Herr Kempff places the melody above the *cantus firmus* in octaves in order to end with a grand fortissimo climax, while Busoni finishes *semplice*. Otherwise, both versions seem to be equally effective.

"I MINUETTI DI CA' TIEPOLO" for Piano. By G. Francesco Malipiero. New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc. (*Ed. Bote & G. Bock Edition*). \$1.50.

The six minuets comprising this volume are written in the style of Rameau, Corelli and Scarlatti, with single notes in the bass and a couple of full chords thrown in at the cadences. Did the composer intend to show that an ultra-modernist can write extremely old-fashioned music if he wants to? Nobody doubted that. Anyhow, these little pieces are pleasant enough for those who like this kind of stuff.

MAURICE B. KATZ

BOOKS

FRENCH PIANO MUSIC: *First Series*. By Alfred Cortot. Translated by Hilda Andrews. New York: Carl Fischer, Inc. (Oxford University Press). \$2.50.

Alfred Cortot is a familiar name to concertgoer and record collector alike and so needs no introduction here. One of the foremost pianists appearing before the microphone today, his association with the phonograph goes back to pre-electrical days. Since the electrical process was developed, he has made many memorable records and has assisted in such unforgettable sets as the Schubert Trio in B Flat, the Beethoven *Archduke* Trio and the Brahms Double Concerto—in the last named album substituting the bâton for the keyboard. But Cortot is more than a finely gifted musician; he is also that rare anomaly: a musician who can write with charm and distinction. The present volume on French piano music, with which subject few can be more familiar than M. Cortot, proves that.

The essays collected here were originally written for the *Revue musicale*. A second series, to be devoted to the works of Saint-Saëns, Vincent d'Indy, Maurice Ravel and others, will follow shortly. The composers considered in the first series are Claude Debussy, César Franck, Gabriel Fauré, Emmanuel Chabrier and Paul Dukas. Perhaps the best way to review M. Cortot's book is by direct quotation. A few excerpts from his illuminating chapters will serve to indicate the flavor and general trend of the book far better than any wordy review.

His studies are, he says, "first and foremost, the notes of a pianist wishing to share his impression, and to create in the listener a state of mental receptivity similar to his own. They aim not so much at a rigid musical analysis or discussion of the æsthetic question as at the expression of the poetical quality of the works concerned. . . . My purpose will be amply achieved if the reading of these commentaries stimulates some lovers of piano music to share my admiration for the wide variety of profound, lyrical, or picturesque compositions in which the creative genius of the musicians of our race has revealed itself, and which, as a whole, reflects one of the supreme moments in the musical history of France."

Debussy, he tells us, "had so perfect a faculty for crystallizing in sound visual impressions, where direct or suggested, by the imagination, by the plastic arts or by literature, that he could turn the full force of his art into a channel of sensations hitherto hardly ever opened to music at all. . . . It is rare to find him inspired by one of those emotions which since the revelation of Beethoven have stirred the soul of composers and inspired their works: that is, passion, grief, and human ardours. Not that he disdains or repudiates emotion in music; but a sort of patrician reticence leads him rather to suggest it by inference than to allow us directly to experience it."

Since Cortot has recorded Franck's *Variations symphoniques*, it might be of interest to hear what he has to say about the work: "There are some works which one takes to one's heart, just as one does some people. One hesitates to analyse 'love at first sight' in the fear that too profound an examination may cause disillusionment. And such was my state of mind when I undertook . . . the analysis of the work of Franck's that I have played most, and of which I have had the pleasure of being at least a loving interpreter—if I had no other merit—in nearly every city in the old and the new worlds. . . . If the *Variations symphoniques* do not exhibit so forceful an ideal as the *Prélude, Choral et Fugue*, or the quartet, or the first movement of the symphony, it unquestionably is, with the sonata for piano and violin, the most perfect artistic production that Franck wrote. I do not say the most beautiful, but the most lucid and polished." An extended analysis, too long for quotation here, follows.

The book can be enjoyed by anyone interested in piano music, and especially by those who are fond of French piano music. Cortot avoids tiresome technical discussion, nor does he go into the matter of interpretation, though he might well be expected to do so, since he is an admirable one himself. The music is what interests him, and the effect it has on the listener, and he writes about these things in an unfailingly communicative and sensitive way. The translation from the French is competently done by Hilda Andrews.

